

QUARTERLY STATUS REPORT

DATE: January 27, 2006

STREAMLINING

PROJECT: Evaluation of Wildlife Crossing Structures on US Highway 93 Evaro to Polson—Phase 1: Pre-construction data collection and finalization of evaluation

START DATE: March 1, 2002

EXPECTED

COMPLETION DATE: June 30, 2006

FUNDING LEVEL: \$562,500 (including 20% match from Montana Department of Transportation)

ANTICIPATED

PRODUCTS:

- Memo to Technical Design Committee on monitoring design considerations (completed May 2002)
- Animal-vehicle collision database (80% complete)
- Field Methods and Safety Protocol Handbook (draft 100% complete; submitted to MDT April 4, 2005)
- Summary of literature and existing data (90% complete; draft submitted to MDT tech panel October 2005)
- Memo defining the Measures of Effectiveness (75% complete)
- Long-term Research and Monitoring Evaluation Plan (60% complete)
- Phase 1 Pre-construction Case Study (60% complete)
- Pre-construction field data summary report (40% complete)

MEASURABLE

RESULTS:

(i.e. how did the project advance environmental streamlining)

PLEASE PROVIDE THE STATUS OF ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTS (E.G., PROJECT MILESTONES, DELIVERABLES, PRODUCT DISSEMINATION, RELEVANT DIVISION ACTIVITIES) FOR THE PROJECT IN THE APPROPRIATE SPACE(S) BELOW.

FOURTH 2005 REPORTING PERIOD (10/1/05-12/31/05)

Division Contact: Bob Seliskar

Funding Spent-to-Date: \$548,721.95

Funding Balance Remaining: \$13,778.05

On-going Activities

- Literature search and compilation of relevant data (note: WTI has obtained all available animal-vehicle collision and carcass removal data from MDT's Safety Bureau, through August 2005; MDT informed WTI that the remaining 2005 data will be available in March 2006).
- Mentoring Whisper Maillet, WTI Graduate Fellow supported in cooperation with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), with her thesis field research on US 93 deer crossings and deer-vehicle mortalities prior to the installation of mitigation measures. Her results will be summarized in a chapter in the final report.

October 2005

- Completed monitoring track beds (2x/week) in Ravalli Curves, Ravalli Hill and Evaro study areas.
- Completed final 4 pellet transects.
- All field data entered, archived, and quality control protocols applied.
- Delivered draft literature review to MDT Technical Panel.

November 2005

- Performed basic initial analyses of the animal-vehicle collision data, tracking data, and pellet transect data.
- Drafting case study, measures of effectiveness, and post-construction monitoring plan for the comprehensive draft report due in April 2006.

December 2005

- Prepared to present preliminary data results to the US 93 Technical Design Committee at their January 2006 meeting.
- Drafting case study, measures of effectiveness, and post-construction monitoring plan for the comprehensive draft report due in April 2006.

Summary

We are in the final stages of assembling all components of the preconstruction study. Draft interim product delivery is behind schedule; however, we expect to deliver an integrated draft preconstruction report to MDT by April 30, 2006, in order to finalize the report by the contract end date of June 30, 2006. Details on the various components of the report follow:

- Literature review draft was delivered to MDT Technical Panel;
- Bear study has been drafted and successfully defended; final thesis was delivered April 2005 and will be summarized in a chapter in the final report. Data from this effort is being compiled and archived for future reference.
- Deer study is in process of analyses and drafting of thesis; we expect a draft thesis to be delivered by February 2006 and will summarize the results in a chapter in the final report. Data from this effort is being compiled and archived for future reference.
- Field data collection and quality control protocols are documented in the Field Methods Handbook. MDT provided comments on the draft of the Handbook in July, which will be incorporated into the comprehensive draft report that will be delivered in April 2006.
- Road-kill data has been compiled through August of 2005; the remaining 2005 data will be available in March. WTI is performing initial analyses on these data for the preconstruction report; additionally, WTI will present preliminary results to the US 93 Technical Design Committee in January.

- The third (and last) season of preconstruction track bed monitoring was completed in October. WTI is performing initial analyses on these data for the preconstruction report; additionally, WTI will present preliminary results to the US 93 Technical Design Committee in January.
- The case study, measures of effectiveness and post-construction monitoring plan are in various stages of drafting for the comprehensive draft report due April 2006.

Note: To accommodate a third season of track bed monitoring (an unforeseen opportunity that was not budgeted for in the original scope), MDT provided supplemental funding in addition to the original allocation of \$562,500 that was to be utilized if/when the initial funding was depleted. It is likely that WTI will deplete the original funds and begin spending the supplemental funding in the next quarter (Jan 2006-March 2006).